



Teacher Support Staff Superintendent Advisory

4:00-5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, April 15, 2014

Administration Building – 215 S. 6th Street West

Room 14

Members: Adriel Shearer, Alex Apostle, Anthony Zook, Avis Chenoweth, Bradford Herron, Camille Barraclough, Carol MacIntyre, Cathleen Armstrong, Connie Pederson, Crista Anderson, Dave Burtch, Diane Anderson, Elizabeth McGrath, Hatton Littman, Janice Nugent, Karen Allen, Mary McAllister, Melanie Charlson, Melissa Lynn, Sarah Lee, Tricia Owens

Members Present: Adriel Shearer, Alex Apostle, Dave Burtch, Diane Anderson, Sarah Lee, Crista Anderson, Janice Nugent, Hatton Littman, Jane McAllister

Members Absent: Anthony Zook, Avis Chenoweth, Brad Herron, Camille Barraclough, Carol MacIntyre, Cathleen Armstrong, Connie Pederson, Elizabeth McGrath, Karen Allen, Melanie Charlson, Melissa Lynn, Tricia Owens

NOTES

Welcome – At 4:04 p.m. Dr. Alex Apostle opened the meeting and stated that several members called and said they cannot make it.

Use of PIR day to make up snow day. - Adriel Shearer (tabled March 25th)

Alex said he thinks we have taken care of it. Adriel said that basically the suggestion was that we make up a snow day on the PIR day, but the Board already dealt with that. The concern was that instructional time would be better spending of the PIR day than PIR. Hatton: good to know for the future. Diane: another reason for every kid to have a device: for kids to go home and be able to work on it. Sarah Lee brought up Rattlesnake and the concern because of the extra day they missed for the heater. Hatton:

Mark is running point on that. We have not received any other information that Rattlesnake is not going to be okay. Alex: it is going to be fine. Extra days are built into the schedule.

Adriel noted that he would like to add one thing to the agenda if we have time.

Highlight the resources that we are adding to the TSSS Committee section on the MCPS Wiki-Diane Anderson

Diane explained that she has put a few resources on the MCPS Wiki. The beauty is that you can add resources if you find things. She gave the examples of the L.A. Public Schools employee recognition format. On the Wiki under Committees, go to TSS, then Staff Recognition. [Jane McAllister arrived.] Some are web-based, some are documents people have compiled. Diane explained that this goes along with the information she passed out previously that you need to keep in mind with an employee recognition program. She is talking specifically about district overarching policy and not doing away with the local things. Support staff are not included often. Diane did talk with Carol Ewen, who is excited about incorporating staff recognition into MBI (Montana Behavioral Initiative). Diane showed her a number of articles, including research articles you can read, things from the Missoulian and different places. We do things within the district that do recognize our folks. If there are things you want to add, protocols you think would be really good, like a lottery, a small \$25 gift certificate, something community-based and tangible that enhances their experience—Diane would encourage you to add things to this. Carol will be looking at it. There is a survey Diane has available; she is waiting for authority to put it out. She would be happy to mail it to the committee. You can fill out the survey, see how it goes, then push it out as the district determines is appropriate. Hatton: that was her question. She thinks it is perfectly appropriate from the content. Would this go to every staff member across the district, and we would get that kind of response from everyone? Diane said what she is looking for from the committee and from the district administration, is what is their expectation and how do they want to manage it. Alex suggested sending it out to the entire staff, to everybody, and getting their take on things and having a smaller group of people put together a plan we could initiate in the fall. Sending it out to the entire staff would be a good thing. We have a lot of great things happening, people going above and beyond the call of duty every day. It would be good if we were to implement a real recognition program, something people could support and get involved with. Diane is interested in keeping it as a grassroots effort, something people are engaged in. We define our protocol and put it in a document, so people can see it: that is the direction this committee wants to take it? Hatton: yes, speaking for herself. If we do send it district wide, you might get 500 responses if we are doing well. For the sake of data processing, she might rewrite some questions so they are less open ended—instead, give examples and ask people if they meet their need. Otherwise we could get responses on a continuum that would be a lot of work on the back end. Diane: the great thing about Schoolwires is that we have the capacity to revise the questions like that. The way we are managing it is sustainability; readily assessable is another phase of it. Carol was very enthusiastic. With the collaborative process we will all end up with something we can be happy with. Alex: how does the committee feel about recognition in general—is it something we need to pursue? Something the staff would appreciate if it were consistent? Crista: if it is genuine. Dave: people get a gas card or something. Alex: we have been doing it, but it is not as broad or systematic as it could be. That is his take on it; he is interested in your opinion as a committee. Adriel: if it comes from staff rather than the administration, it will be most appreciated and authentic. Staff recognizing other members of their

staff would have a much more positive reaction than if it was the administration recognizing people from the staff. Janice agrees: she suggests it coming from the staff informing the administration. She thinks educators would like the administration to know they had been recognized by their community. She thinks the articles Betsy Cohen wrote before she passed away were so outstanding and inspiring. That's when this talk started in this committee; we are taking our cue from that. Is MBI at every school? Alex: yes, in various stages, but it is at every school. Jane noted the awards that seem to be out there: if you know someone has done something above and beyond the call of duty and you are in the trenches and know that, you could nominate people. If we had things we were looking for to nominate our staff, it would be good, but the administration could say your staff recognized you because of these things. She thinks people like it when the higher-ups know what you are doing out there. Diane: there are some good examples on the Wiki, different ways sites have managed that. It adds validity to the whole process. Clearly identifiable goals. A lot of times they are designed to reinforce the goals of the district, which can be defining and confining, or give direction, guiding people in a very positive way. Alex: can we come to the conclusion that 1-we want something in place ready to go for fall, 2-a way to expand the committee to help Diane and Carol, so we have teacher representation even beyond this committee, so we can put it out there, and say the teachers came up with this? Keeping it simple for the first year would be important. Crista: when putting out the survey, consider that a lot of times we get multiple surveys going to staff at the same time; be cognizant of what else is going on at same time. Too many open-ended fields will not get as much feedback. The timing: she suggests asking if anyone else is putting out a big survey, e.g. Flagship, etc. Alex: good point; it is busy all year, but in the spring it gets hectic. Being cognizant of that, keeping it simple, making sure there are not 10 surveys out there to fill out. Alex asked if we would like to see this ready to go by fall. Diane: you really have to have a target that you worked towards. Alex: let's shoot for the fall and see how that goes, unless someone objects. Good.

Education coverage in the Missoulian:

Dave: you were talking about Betsy passing. Is there another reporter? Hatton: Alice Miller is the new education beat reporter. Hatton has had meetings with Alice and with Tyler Christensen. They have pitched a child-focused beat, so it is not just K-12, but taking the angle of covering a lot of the community partners we already work with, like Parks and Rec, the United Way, the whole-child approach. She has talked with people already partnering in the schools, so they can see how much teamwork and partnering there is in the community. Alice intends to continue the spotlight stories. She has covered quite a lot in the past 2 weeks since she started the beat. She is very approachable. If you want to reach out to her, please do, but copy Hatton so she knows about it and she can respond if she is asked as well.

Smarter Balanced testing concerns

Adriel had 2 concerns relating to Smarter Balanced testing that he was approached to bring before the committee. 1-parental consent: notification to parents concerning the testing, particularly at the elementary level where students are experiencing 7-9 hours of screen time over 7 days. A parent felt there was not appropriate notification of the procedure about Smarter Balanced testing at the elementary. There was discussion related to that of not being able to opt their child out. There is no opt-out? Alex: that is correct. State law communicates that every student must be tested when it comes to testing. In reality, we have had parents, not many, complain to the principal, then to Alex. If a

parent insists that they don't want their child to take the test, what are you going to do? You can't make them take the test. A parent came in and cited various reasons they did not want their child to take the test. Alex said if they feel that strongly that they don't want them to take it, he will not tell them their child has to. It is not right to say that; they are the parent. We have made exceptions, probably a total of 6 that he knows of right now. Next year when it is the test, we will probably be a lot tougher. We will communicate early and often that this is a state mandated test. Hopefully we have enough time before the test is administered to answer any questions. When parents come in and are emphatic, what can we do? Very few people like standardized tests; they would like to reduce the number or eliminate them. But it is state law that we will test all our kids. This is a trial period. The state will have to come out and help us. They did not support their own laws, and they put us in a precarious position. We have told them that they need to let people know that they have to take the test. Adriel: the secretary at Sentinel notified people 2-3 weeks before the test; they notified people through the email system. Adriel suggests more advance notification; this parent felt they did not see any. Alex: it was communicated. Hatton: the screen time may not have been clear. Adriel: or the computer testing. Crista: one of the assessments said it is recommended that it be done in not more than 2 sessions, so they are doing it in one really long session. In leadership team, they talked about how to build sessions. For third, fourth, and fifth grade especially, it is being given as one session and really should be two. Jane: it is not clear cut. If it said stop at 22, we could end the session, but they never let us see the test in the beginning. So we assumed for session one there would be a clear end spot. We kept waiting, and all of a sudden we were at 44. Crista: students are given different tests, it is not computer adaptive, and it is taking longer to get through. She suggested we have students have a stopping point where they can review answers, now that we know. That is the good part about being able to do the pilot: being able to figure things out. We could try to pace it over two weeks. Jane: people are doing walk to math and walk to reading; there is a domino effect. Huge chunks of time. We had problems with the computer lab being able to handle that number of kids. We have to have our kids have more keyboarding. They say they want the response to be several paragraphs long, citing 3 examples for each one, and yet the kids are doing hunt and peck. Crista: make sure Kim articulates that at the leadership committee tomorrow; we are gathering feedback for when we do it next year. Shorter 45 minute sessions will not impact walk to math and walk to reading as much. Does it start at 3rd grade? Yes. Do students usually write essays on the computer? No. Hatton: we will be doing keyboarding in the fall. Alex: his personal take is that we moved too fast again, in terms of training teachers, working with teachers, communicating, and working with students to be sure they can do the work being requested. It is not fair if they are hunting and pecking. Collecting information like we are, doing the best we can to prepare for next year, is very important. He has said from the beginning, we had the leave no student behind effort by George Bush, and now this. It is frustrating for him and for our staff. Is this going to be around, or is it going to change again? Janice: it is going to change. Alex: we have seen things come and go. We are not steady. New governor, new congress, new president, reacting to wishes of people who don't understand what we are doing every day. We are lucky we have this trial run; hopefully we can learn from it and make things better next time. Adjustments will be made.

Disruption to the learning day

Adriel brought up the disruption to the learning day. Particularly for juniors at the high school level, their month is pretty well shot. They are losing this whole week, then there is the ACT. Teachers are

concerned about losing a week of instructional time, and they are not able to deliver that level of the curriculum. AP tests are quickly approaching. He thinks the elementary is having disruption also. Jane: in 4th grade it is science and math. Alex: these things were mentioned early on; the train was on the tracks. Hatton: the Smarter Balanced consortium could develop a suite of Smarter Balanced products to replace some of the current assessments. It will not correct for the Smarter Balanced/ACT issue.

Jane: the snow day is okay? Yes. Remember 2001 snow in June.

Start of the school year celebration 2014-15 – Alex Apostle

Alex: For the first couple of years he was here, we had a rally in the gym, then we went to the barbecues the last 3 years. The barbecue at the end of the year is quickly approaching—that is the retirement celebration. He is talking about the start of year barbecue. Alex would like to see, in his opinion, that we continue the barbecue and celebrate our schools and our departments in terms of what they have accomplished. Ideas he is throwing out for consideration: we could meet at the Sentinel gym in the morning. Teams of teachers and administrators at each school could come up and make a statement: e.g., we are Paxson Elementary, this is what we have accomplished, we are proud of it, and this is where we are going. We would run through all the schools. We would highlight great things accomplished, things they are working on, and be done. An opportunity to share all the good things happening in our schools. An opportunity for people to come together. We would still have the barbecue. Adriel suggested that teachers go to Sentinel in the morning and back to their own buildings, then to the barbecue and back to the buildings in the afternoon for building-related work. Janice suggested building-related work from 8-10, then a rally in the gym, not the back and forth. There is a nice chunk of time for a building meeting in the morning at 8 or 8:30, then meet at Sentinel and have the barbecue. Janice likes the idea, very positive. Alex: each school could present in any way they liked, with a few or a lot of staff, dress up, banners. A way to celebrate efforts we have put forth. Jane: some people like her are always trying to get a teacher talent show going. We made money two years ago, but there are teachers who don't want to get up in front of people and perform. Alex: you could have a representative, the principal if no one else. Janice would say nobody should spend more than 15 minutes preparing, not a job for anyone. Alex suggested a 5 minute presentation. We could put together a video highlighting the successes of our schools. We would leave it wide open for a school to do whatever they want to do. It would be a five minute timeline because of the number of schools, if we are trying to stay within a 2 hour time limit. The first couple years we kept it to one and a half hours. Celebrating the good work, coming together, is right in line with recognition, reviewing where we have been, and where we are going. Jane: technology people could coordinate a slide show or PowerPoint. We could ask people to send in photos of things you have done in the last year. That way you don't have one school that does a wonderful thing and another that is just doing it. Every school takes tons of photos; send those in. Hatton said she is meeting with MCAT next week. One option available to us is that they could come to each school this spring to shoot 2-3 minutes at each school about cool things they are doing; they could spend the summer putting it together into a 30 minute presentation. It would require people to get some things together in the spring though. The principal and a core group of people in each building will have to make themselves available when the photographer is in the building. Jane: there might be things in place: e.g. at L&C they have "A Night to Shine," in which kids pick one thing they are proud of for the year and showcase it in the gym. They are doing that May 7; it would be great night for filming it. Hatton: you would have to organize pretty

clear days when the guy could go around and film. If she can fit it around some of those special things, she will. Janice: Montana PBS would throw that on a couple of times during the week too; it would be a great thing. She thinks it is a wonderful thing to have. She is not sure it will get people to the barbecue. Adriel: bringing the staffs of all the schools together in one place at one time will have an impact; it is a moment we will have. He likes the idea of the production, but it has a place for it. He thinks the productions of schools at the barbecue could be really nice. Janice and Alex said they love the idea of filming. With the giant mill levy and others down the road, it would be a wonderful thing to have that would showcase the schools. Diane suggests we remember our support staff. People don't always work in the school buildings, but we need to recognize what they do. Alex: that's why we said departments and schools. He feels we have a great staff that are doing great things. He wants to start the year by truly celebrating the great things people have done, to do it tastefully. He would like that we pack the gym, that people will be there. He will ask people that they need to be there; there will be some who don't. Janice and Crista suggested door prizes. It would be great if we give away door prizes—Amazon, iTunes, Barnes and Noble. Teachers are paying a lot of money out of pocket. Alex: we could do that. Janice: a little silliness, a little joy. Alex has talked to Melanie and Sheri, who support it. Jane: let people know ahead of time—now would be good—that we are looking at making opening day an uplifting, positive staff presentation. It is better if you let them know ahead of time, not when you are trying to get your classroom together. Sarah: like soon, now, people should know. Alex: how do we go about it? Should it come from him, from the school administrators? Crista: administrators, principals. Janice: principals could allot a 15 minute period in a building meeting where it could be planned in time already committed to building meetings. She doesn't want people thinking they need to do major creative things. Just stand up and talk about highlights. Alex: explain a program we are implementing this year, and done. Janice: an introduction. Sarah suggests we have a time limit, busy days. Alex: does 5 minutes sound too short? No, there was agreement among committee members. The length should be 3-5 minutes. There are 17 schools plus programs, and that is an hour already. Adriel encourages not allowing anyone to use technology. Alex: what Hatton was talking about would be great to have in preparation for the bond and various events in the school district. Janice: we used to spend a day listening to something that was out there. An hour and a half was too much from us to us. Alex: it is the staff making this happen. We are not bringing in a speaker; people don't want to listen to a speaker. This is the staff elaborating on good things they are doing and where we are going. A positive start, championing the good things we are doing and going to do. Alex and the ERDs will meet and they will meet with the principals; they will explain what we want to do, that it is not an elaborate production, 3-5 minutes, with enthusiasm. Alex likes the idea of meeting at 10 am, doing it for an hour and a half, and going to the barbecue. Janice: we would have the building meetings out of the way. Adriel thinks 3 minutes should be the target, doing the math. Sarah: no technology or setting up equipment.

Alex said he might call a half hour meeting to get everyone who volunteered for this committee to hear this conversation, then he will meet with the principals and get it out there. It will be 3-5 minutes to promote what you are doing. Diane: 2-3 minutes, and if they run longer we won't chastise them. Alex: school colors, dressing up. Jane: high schools showing colors; spirit week. Spirit day. Janice said she liked it. Alex: is the committee saying go ahead, pursue this? Yes. Alex said he will call a half hour meeting. He will send out a request; we will meet here and get consensus, probably early next week. He knows it is busy; he wants to be sure everyone in our committee is supportive. He will also talk to Melanie and Sheri to make sure they are with us.

Sarah: will the menu be hot dogs, ice cream and soda? Alex: we can talk about that. Sarah noted that she has vegetarian co-workers. Alex: bring suggestions for food. We can change the menu and make it more attractive—fruit and salads. Diane: pulled pork, easy to serve. Alex said he might get some people who could contribute and donate. Sarah thinks food could entice people there. Alex: we can say the group came up with the menu and that we are changing it based on the committee recommendation. Dave knows a bus driver who has a barbecue shop in Hamilton; he is not sure of the budget. Dave will find out how much.

Alex: anything else? We have 5 minutes. We are busy trying to select principals at 2 elementaries, busy today and tomorrow. We have selected a principal at Big Sky HS; the staff did. He will tell you based on the good things we are initiating that he will try to keep things as steady as possible in terms of leadership positions in the buildings, making sure we are providing the stability that we need right now. We want to finish the school year strong. We are monitoring a number of things as relates to our progress. Right now we want to keep moving in the direction we are in terms of Facility Strategic Plan and Five Year Instructional Strategic Plan. The one thing you need to know is that in our Five Year Plan we are implementing dual language immersion in more schools, academies, and so on. But you can only do so much. You have a plan, but if the budget doesn't get us there, we have to make adjustments. The plan is the dream. He has meetings next week with potential donors to our district to keep things moving. They are very excited about being our partners. They are seeing results, seeing progress. Alex has said that progress makes people want to contribute. We are making sure teacher-student ratios are within accreditation standards and providing paras when we go over. We have never been over accreditation, and we won't be. As you hear about the direction of the district, know that we will be very cognizant of the budget also. We will not sacrifice teacher-student ratios in the classroom. In five years we may not be all the way there, but we know where we want to go, and we have a very good idea.

Alex asked if anyone has anything else—No. He told the committee to be looking for a half hour meeting next week.

Superintendent Alex Apostle adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

As recording secretary for this meeting, I certify these minutes to be a true and correct copy of what was taken at the meeting.

Elizabeth Serviss, Minutes Recorder

Alex P. Apostle, Superintendent

Wiki link for Teacher, Support Staff, Superintendent, Advisory Committee Information

[http://www.mcpsonline.org/index.php/Teacher, Support Staff, Superintendent, Advisory Committee](http://www.mcpsonline.org/index.php/Teacher,_Support_Staff,_Superintendent,_Advisory_Committee)